WE CLAIM:

1.   A computer-readable medium, having computer-executable components, comprising:

a data structure including variable/value mappings;

a pathname resolver configured to identify a variable in a pathname, to retrieve from the data structure a value associated with the identified variable, and to modify the pathname such that the variable is replaced with the value from the data structure.

2.   The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the pathname resolver comprises a variable identifier that is configured to identify the variable in the pathname.

3.   The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the pathname resolver comprises a pathname engine that is configured to identify the variable by performing the following steps:

searching for the variable in the data structure;

accessing the corresponding value; and

inserting the value in place of the variable in the pathname such that the path identifies the location of an object.

4.   The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the data structure is implemented in a kernel mode of an operating system.

5.   The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein variable/value pairs are defined in the data structure by a user.

6.   The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein variable/value pairs are defined in the data structure by a context in which the computer-readable medium operates.

10

7. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions comprising:

receiving a pathname that includes a variable;

resolving the pathname by mapping the variable to a corresponding value in a data structure;

returning a handle to an object pointed to by the resolved pathname; and

expanding the data structure by adding variable/value pairs to the data structure.

8. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 7, further comprising identifying the variable in the pathname.

9. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 8, further comprising searching for the variable in a data structure implemented in the kernel of an operating system.

10. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 9, further comprising inserting the value corresponding to the variable in place of the variable in the pathname.

11. A computer-readable medium encoded with an extensible data structure comprising:

a first field including an identification of a variable included in a pathname; and

a second field including a value for the variable, the pathname including the value being operable to point to an object.

12. The computer-readable medium encoded with an extensible data structure of claim 11, wherein the data structure is stored in the kernel of an operating system.

13.   The computer-readable medium encoded with an extensible data structure of claim 11, wherein the data structure is expandable by adding variable/value pairs.

14.   A computer-implemented method, comprising:

identifying a variable in a pathname provided by a component requesting access to an object;

mapping the variable to a corresponding value in a data structure;

modifying the pathname by replacing the variable in the pathname with the corresponding value such that the resolved pathname creates a path that points to the object; and

returning to the requesting component the modified pathname.

15.   The computer-implemented method of claim 14, further comprising receiving a pathname that includes a variable.

16.   The computer-implemented method for resolving a pathname of claim 14, further comprising searching for the variable in the data structure implemented in the kernel of an operating system.

17.   A computer-readable medium with computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 14.